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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000030

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KU](#) [PHUM](#) [KDRG](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: KUWAITI FATHER PLEADS FOR HIS SON'S RELEASE FROM
GTMO

Classified By: A/DCM Lenderking for reasons 1.4 b and d

Summary and Comment

1. (C) An open letter appeared in the January 7 Kuwait Times that contained a personal plea to President Bush for the release of the author's son, Fawzi (AKA Fouzi Khalid Abdullah Al-Awdah-ISN 232) from GTMO. The letter is well-crafted and rational as opposed to the usual diatribes on GTMO that appear in the press. In the last few weeks, in the run-up to the January 11-12 POTUS visit, Post has witnessed an increase in the number of articles related to GTMO, and we anticipate that the issue of the four remaining Kuwaiti GTMO detainees will remain a central concern for Kuwaitis prior to and during the POTUS visit. End Summary and Comment.

2. (C) The author, Khalid Al Odah (Al-Awdah), is Chairman of the Guantanamo Detainee Association, an NGO that lobbies the GOK for the release of Kuwaiti detainees held in GTMO. He is not a regular columnist, but occasionally writes articles to raise the awareness of his son's long-term detention at GTMO.

According to the deputy editor at Kuwait Times, Al Odah submitted the below op-ed to coincide with the POTUS visit.

Please Send Our Sons Home

3. (U) Begin Text:
Kuwait Times
7 January, 2008

Please Send Our Sons Home
By: Khalid Al Odah

I last saw my son Fawzi in the fall of 2001 when he left to teach at a school in Afghanistan. After bounty hunters captured him during the American invasion in Afghanistan in 2002, he was flown to the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Six years later, he remains imprisoned there without any charges against him.

At first, there were 12 Kuwaitis in Guantanamo Bay. In 2005 and 2006, the United States returned eight of them to Kuwait, where that country's courts charged, tried and cleared them of any wrongdoing. They are now home with their families, rebuilding their lives.

Yet, despite the best efforts of our government, Fawzi and three other Kuwaitis remain imprisoned. All that I and other families are asking for is a fair trial before an impartial judge, either in the United States or in Kuwait, to determine whether Fawzi and the three other Kuwaitis should be imprisoned. But the Bush administration has fought to prevent Fawzi or any other Guantanamo prisoner from having

such a hearing. Why doesn't the United States trust its own courts? We do, and we are willing to abide by the results of the legal process.

In addition, we have made every effort to obtain justice for the remaining detainees. The Amir of Kuwait has met personally with President Bush to request their return. Senior Kuwaiti officials have repeated this request to their US counterparts. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said Guantanamo Bay could close once countries provide assurances that returned prisoners would not endanger public safety. Kuwait has made and honored these assurances. Moreover, it's especially important to remember that Kuwait has been a great ally to the United States and a steadfast friend of the American people. We have been providing critical support for the Iraq War and other armed conflicts in the Gulf region before that. When I was a young pilot in the Kuwaiti Air Force, I spent two years in Texas, learning about America, its principles and its institutions. I developed a love and respect for the US system of justice which was founded on the belief that all people are innocent until proven guilty.

Mr. President, Kuwait and its people have done everything America has asked of them. We have remained faithful as an ally to the United States and as a friend to the American people, taking seriously our commitment to work with your administration to help protect our world from those who lack respect for the rule of law. Therefore, Mr. President, it's time to trust the State of Kuwait as your faithful ally and to return my son and the other three Kuwaitis to face justice in their own country. Please send Fawzi and the other Kuwaitis home now.

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End Text.

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MISENHEIMER